

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently amended) A method of preparing an aqueous extract of saponins from butter cake meal from a Shea Butter Tree (*Butyrospermum parkii*) comprising saponins and said method comprising the following steps:
 - (i) mixing one part by weight of butter cake meal with 4-30 parts by weight of water;
 - (ii) incubating the mixture formed in step (i) under alkaline conditions (pH > 7); and
 - (iii) recovering an aqueous extract comprising saponins by removing solids from the alkaline mixture formed in step (ii) to yield an extract containing saponins.
2. (Original) A method according to claim 1, wherein the alkaline conditions are obtained by addition of an alkali in the form of a base and/or an alkaline buffer.
3. (Cancelled).
4. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 1, wherein the incubation in step (ii) is performed at a pH of 7-14, preferably 7-10.

5. (Currently amended) A method according to claim 1, wherein the incubation step (ii) is performed over a temperature of between 15°C and 95°C at a period of between 10 minutes and 5 hours.
6. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 1, wherein solids are removed from the extract in step (iii) by filtration or centrifugation.
7. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 1, yielding an extract containing at least 1 weight-% dry matter.
8. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 1, wherein the extract obtained in step (iii) is further concentrated and/or purified by evaporation of water and/or ultrafiltration and/or recrystallization.
9. - 20. (Cancelled).